



Arizona Department of Agriculture

1688 W. Adams Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-4373 FAX (602) 542-5420

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MEDIA CONTACT: Laura Oxley, 602-542-1094

VETERINARIAN/LIVESTOCK OWNERS CONTACT: State Veterinarian 602-542-4293

THREE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PROPERTIES QUARANTINED DUE TO CONTAGIOUS VIRUS

Positive Diagnosis of Vesicular Stomatitis Virus in 2 Horses

Two horses in Santa Cruz County have been confirmed with Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV). It causes blister-like sores on the mouths, noses and sometimes feet of infected animals. One animal was moved to its owner's nearby property prior to the investigation; three properties and all the animals on them are under quarantine.

"Vesicular Stomatitis Virus mainly affects equine and to a lesser extent cattle and swine," said State Veterinarian Dr. Perry Durham. "It can be painful for animals and costly to deal with."

The blisters are most likely to affect the mouth, the tongue and around the nose/muzzle. They can be painful causing difficulty in eating and drinking. If cattle are infected, often the hooves and teats are involved leading to severe economic impact in dairy cattle. This also generates worries because the disease is basically indistinguishable from Foot and Mouth Disease in cattle.

The horses involved have no history of travel. Other livestock located on the premises show no signs of disease. A United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) official initially investigated and then brought the Arizona Department of Agriculture into the investigation. Investigation of

the situation is on-going to detect and prevent further spread.

Veterinarians and livestock owners who suspect an animal may have Vesicular Stomatitis or any other vesicular disease should immediately contact State or Federal animal health authorities. Livestock with clinical signs of Vesicular Stomatitis are isolated until they are healed and determined to be of no further threat for disease spread. There are no USDA approved vaccines for Vesicular Stomatitis.

Though very unusual, people can be infected with the virus. In these situations, it is usually among those who handle infected animals (for example while inspecting a horse's mouth and the horse coughs in the person's face thereby delivering a large dose of virus onto the person's eyes and lips). Vesicular Stomatitis Virus can cause flu-like symptoms and only rarely includes lesions or blisters in people.

More information about Vesicular Stomatitis is available [online](#).